

### Are the Filipinos Capable of Self-Government?

If the intelligence of the Americans is to be taken as the standard by which the capacity for self-government is to be determined, then it is very doubtful whether any other people are capable of establishing and maintaining a republican form of government. Every country has peoples of high and low order of intelligence, and if we are to assume that the men of lowest order of civilization are to rule, we might exclude from self-government every nation on earth. It is the experience of mankind, however, that the intelligent classes in all the countries rule. That being true, there are very few peoples who are not capable of self-government. It was Henry Clay who said that it was impossible for him to conceive of a people who were incapable of self-government.

Of the republics of Central and South America, it is safe to say that, although they may not be as perfect in the administration of affairs as the United States, yet they have given to the people governments far better and freer from acts of tyranny and oppression than the governments which preceded them.

The general impression exists among many Americans that the Philippine people are savages. A visit to the islands will certainly dispel any such delusion. The members of the uncivilized tribes of the archipelago are few in number, compared to the total population; they are fewer in proportion than were the tribes of Indians in America at the time of the establishment of our republic. They rove in bands and are as hostile to the Filipinos as were the red men to our forefathers.

When I find behind the prescription desks of the numerous drug stores of the islands, even when kept by Americans and Englishmen, Filipinos compounding medicines taken from bottles labeled in Latin; when I see behind the counter of banks having large capital, natives acting as bookkeepers and as receiving and paying tellers; when I find them as merchants and clerks in almost all lines of business, as telegraph operators and ticket agents, conductors and engineers upon railroads and as musicians rendering upon almost all instruments high class music; when I am told that they alone make the observations and intricate calculations at the Manila observatory and that prior to the insurrection there were 2,100 schools in the islands and 5,000 students in attendance at the Manila university; when I find the better class living in good, substantial and sometimes elegant houses, and many of them pursuing professional occupations, I cannot but conclude that it is a vile slander to compare these people to the Apaches or the American Indians. Even the civilizing test of Christianity is in their favor, as a greater proportion are members of the church than among our own people. Of the 8,000,000 of inhabitants, Mr. Sawyer, in his work on the Philippine Islands, asserts that 5,869,000 are Christian natives.

But even as to the Indians, as uncivilized as they may be, our government recognizes that it produces a better condition of things to let them govern themselves, and thereby we even recognize in them a capacity for self-government. We do not rule them—we make treaties with them as we do with nations. We do not appoint a governor or commission to govern them, nor judges to administer laws

among them, nor a police force to maintain order. We let them select their own chiefs, punish their own criminals, and in every way govern themselves so long as they stay on their own reservations.

The instinct of self-government implanted in man makes him ordinarily a better agent in managing his own family and affairs than would be one of greater ability or higher education without that interest. And as with man, so with nations, that same principle of self-betterment ordinarily makes each nation most capable of managing its affairs to the advancement of its own people.

No better illustration of this can be found than in the action of the members of the civil commission of the Philippine islands in fixing official salaries to be paid out of funds collected from the people of a poor and alien race. They voted to the governor, who is a member of the commission, a salary of \$15,000 per annum and \$15 a day for subsistence, making in the aggregate a salary of \$20,375 a year. The governor is also furnished a fine house in which to reside. To each of the commission they voted a compensation, including subsistence of \$15,000 per annum. They voted a yearly salary of \$7,500 to the secretary of the commission, of \$7,000 to each of the six (an exceedingly large number) associate justices of the supreme court, of \$7,500 to the chief justice, of \$6,000 to the treasurer, of \$5,000 to the director-general of posts, and of \$6,000 to the collector of customs. All of these salaries are payable in gold. I do not wish to impugn the honesty of the commissioners, but to call attention to the fact that such action naturally grows out of the attempt of one people to govern another. If that commission were responsible to a constituency, does any one imagine that such salaries would have been voted?

The aggregate area of the Philippine islands is 115,300 square miles, a little less than that of the territory of New Mexico, yet the governor of Mexico receives only \$3,000 per annum, and is not allowed anything for subsistence nor furnished with an executive mansion.

Think of a commissioner, appointed from Washington (a place 10,000 miles from the Philippine islands) composed of men who never saw the land they govern prior to the Spanish war, who do not speak or read the language of the Philippine people, and who are not even of the same race as their subjects, voting to each member a salary which is nearly double that of a cabinet officer of the greatest nation of the world, and three times that of a senator of the United States, and voting to a territorial governor a salary more than double that of the governor of the wealthiest state in the union. How must such action appear to the Filipino laborer, who, furnishing his own food and lodging, earns but twenty-five cents in gold a day! It must be remembered that wealth is nothing more than stored labor, and that in the last analysis labor in one form or another pays all taxes. Such action cannot but make the little brown man doubt the ability of one nation to give good government to another. Does not the conflict of interest between us and the Philippine people, arising from the growing of competing staple products, render us incapable of governing them to their best interest? We know that it will be to the welfare of the islands to give free trade with the United States. American, Spaniards and Filipinos there unanimously agree that the islands can never be well developed without it, yet the very fact that we hesitate in the matter, shows that we are consulting our own interest instead of theirs. No matter how learned and just the judge may be, the ethics of our jurisprudence has determined that he is incapacitated from deciding a

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case when his own interest might be affected. Nations are but aggregations of individuals and are subject to the same influences.

The Filipino is not a bold, warlike or unruly person; he impresses every one as of a shrinking, submissive, kind nature and as one who will suffer great wrongs before he will resist. Such people always appeal to the law and support good government. They have not the tendency of the Spaniard toward revolution. The revolts in which they have participated have been to overthrow Spanish reigns of terror, almost equal in barbarity to that of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands.

The brief experience they had in self-government prior to the insurrection, was entirely in their favor. They established a government modeled after our own. Their state papers would have done credit to any nation. They inaugurated good judicial, school and revenue systems and preserved law and order.

Consul Barrett, a strong supporter of the present administration, wrote of the hundred men who composed the Philippine congress as follows:

"These men, whose sessions I repeatedly attended, conducted themselves with great decorum and showed a knowledge of debate and parliamentary law that would compare favorably with the Japanese parliament. The executive portion of the government was made up of a ministry of bright men, who seemed to understand their respective positions."

Consul-General Wildman, an appointee of the president, speaking of the Philippine government, said: "Aguinaldo has made life and property safe, preserved order, and encouraged a continuation of agricultural pursuits. He has made brigandage and loot impossible, respected private property, forbidden excess either in revenge or in the name of the state, and made a woman's honor safe, in Luzon, than it has been in three hundred years."

Admiral Dewey, it will be remembered, cabled: "These people are far superior in their intelligence, and more capable of self-government than the natives of Cuba; and I am familiar with both races."

The best evidence of the ability of the Philippine people to govern themselves, is that they possess a large intelligent class, thoroughly identified in interest with the islands and capable of administering good government. The civil commission has recognized this ability by recently adding three native members to that governing body; by appointing three Filipinos judges of the supreme court; by selecting about half of the judges of

the first instance and nearly all the governors of the provinces from that race; and by appointing a solicitor-general and many other officers from the natives. Are these officials not in the governing business, and do they not perform their work as well as the Americans? Is it possible that they are capable of governing because they were appointed by the representatives of a distant nation? Would they lose that ability if elected or chosen by properly constituted authority of their own? In the latter event they would make far better officers, because they would consult only the interest of their own people instead of that of a nation 7,000 miles away.

The law of our being is that "the just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed." Then why continue a policy which means the continuing loss of millions to the government, the weakening of the military power of the nation and the destruction of the policy under which we have grown so great? Why not be true to our nature and fulfill the prayer of Lincoln that government of the people, for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth."

JOHN F. SHAFROTH.  
Manila, P. I.

### Solitude and Society.

It takes two for a kiss,  
Only one for a sigh;  
Twain by twain we marry,  
One by one we die.

Joy is a partnership,  
Grief weeps alone;  
Many guests had Cana,  
Gethsemane had One!

—Frederick L. Knowles in Atlanta Constitution.

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